

**Access to Microfinance & Improved Implementation of Policy Reform
(AMIR Program)**

**Business Association Initiative (BAI)
Public Policy Advocacy Technical Assistance**

FINAL REPORT

**Deliverable for Business Association Initiative
Task 2.3.2 Public Policy Advocacy
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This report was prepared by State Senator Fred C. Whiting, Consultant, for the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), sub-contractor to the U.S. Agency for International Development for the AMIR Program in Jordan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	page (1)
Findings	page (3)
Recommendations	page (5)
Action Plans	page (10)
Consultant's Report – Amman Chamber of Commerce	appendix 1
Consultant's Report – Amman Chamber of Industry	appendix 2
Consultant's Report – Jordan Trade Association	appendix 3
Consultant's Report – Amman World Trade Center	appendix 4
Consultant's Report – Business and Professional Womens Club	appendix 5
Consultant's Report – Young Entrepreneurs Association	appendix 6
Workshop Agenda	appendix 7
Workshop Guest List	appendix 8
Workshop Presentation	appendix 9
Workshop Paper “Public Policy Advocacy by Jordanian Business Associations”	appendix 10

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The consultant, State Senator Fred C. Whiting, carried out the assignment during the period October 1 – 28, 1999. The assignment focused on :

- (1) Assessment of the present public policy advocacy practices and activities of the following Jordanian business associations (the AMIR ODG Recipients) :

Amman Chamber of Commerce
Amman Chamber of Industry
Jordan Trade Association
Amman World Trade Center
Business and Professional Women Club
Young Entrepreneurs Association

- (2) Provision of technical assistance and training to the foregoing business associations to strengthen their capability in the organization, management, and techniques needed to develop advocacy/ government relations structures and programs, including techniques for analysis of policy issues, communication and public relations.
- (3) Conduct of a workshop on public policy advocacy, participation by the foregoing six business associations as well as a broad spectrum of Jordanian business associations (see Appendix 8 re attendees),
- (3) Development of Action Plans for the foregoing six business associations based upon the consultant's assessment, technical assistance and recommendations.

Multiple meetings were held during the consultancy period with each of the aforementioned six business associations regarding assessment and provision of technical assistance. Reports (see Appendices 1 through 6) were prepared for, provided to and discussed with each of the

associations. These reports covered, inter alia:

- **organizing for advocacy**
- **issue identification and prioritization**
- **education of membership re the Jordanian law-making process and issues identified for advocacy**
- **establishing working relationships with law-makers**
- **advocacy strategies and tactics**
- **re-active Vs pro-active advocacy**
- **the value of coalitions**

The workshop included an elaboration of the above report items together with case histories drawn from the consultant's experience as a law-maker and as a business association chairman and board member in the United States and overseas.

The six business associations, with the exception of the Amman Chamber of Industry, agreed to accept the consultant's recommendations as an action plan. This will require periodic monitoring to ensure implementation. Following the consultant's recommendation, the Amman World Trade Center has undertaken to organize a symposium to educate members of the various business associations regarding the actual law-making process in Jordan.

FINDINGS

Assessment of Present Organization and Activities

The six business associations are organized in varying degrees for issue identification and public policy advocacy. In each case, advocacy strategies and tactics are organized on a fairly rudimentary basis, in many cases relying heavily upon personal contacts with high-level government officials to the extent that appropriate relationships exist for such contacts.

Business and Professional Women Club – Issue identification is undertaken by an Advisory Committee consisting largely of attorneys and by the Board itself. Advocacy is undertaken on an ad hoc basis by members of the Advisory Committee, Board members and members interested in the issue under consideration. Advocacy to date has largely focused on women's issues such as family law, labor law, women's wages, inequities in the social security laws and crimes of honor. Recent attention has also focused on landlord-tenant laws. The association publicizes issues through a monthly newsletter, press releases, radio and TV and through seminars for members to which the media are invited. Members of the Legal Committee of the Parliament have been invited in the past to meet with the association. Seminars have included participation by government officials, parliamentarians and issue specialists. A member of the Senate is an active member of the association and has been helpful in advocacy. The association employs an in-house attorney capable of some issue research.

Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA) -- The association has an advocacy committee, which meets monthly and makes advocacy proposals to the executive committee and/or Board. Mixed results have been experienced in an innovative attempt to conduct an issues (needs assessment) survey through the YEA website. A major project of the YEA has been the AMIR-supported Vision 20/20 project, which contains a series of on going, long-term policy objectives. A further program under consideration would focus on education in Jordan with an emphasis on business/ vocational education and human resource development. The YEA has limited in-house issues research capability.

Amman World Trade Center (AWTC) – The association has no institutionalized internal issue identification mechanism or capacity for issue analysis. Advocacy efforts are largely reactive and on an ad hoc basis. It must be noted, however, that the AWTC chairman has expressed great interest in organizing the association for issue analysis and advocacy following the consultant's recommendations.

Jordan Trade Association (JTA) – Issues for advocacy are selected by the Research Committee. Members have in the past been canvassed regarding issues of concern. There is an in-house staff person to assist with issue research. Research findings are published for distribution to JTA members, government officials and the public. Advocacy efforts are undertaken by the Board chairman, Board members and members directly affected by the policy issue under consideration.

Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC) – The association appears to be conducting substantial public policy advocacy activities reasonably effectively through traditional (established personal networks) means. Issues and policy programs are initiated by the ACC Research Department, which is also charged with analyzing proposed and enacted legislation. Issues and policy suggestions also emanate from the 30 ACC advisory committees (syndicates) representing various business sectors.

Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) -- According to the Director General of ACI, that association has no internal issue identification mechanism (other than Board discussion) and no internal capacity for issues analysis. The Director General also has indicated to the consultant that ACI has no formal, institutionalized mechanisms for advocacy. Issue identification and advocacy efforts are largely undertaken by the Director General through his established high-level contacts in government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The consultant has recommended to the six business associations, and to those other business associations attending the workshop, a number of specific actions that should be taken by them in order to have effective public policy advocacy programs. These recommendations, tailored to the needs of the various associations, are set out in the consultant's reports addressed to each of the six associations. Discussions of the consultant's reports have been conducted with four of the associations. In the case of the Jordanian Trade Association, the discussion meeting was cancelled by the JTA, but the executive director was provided with the consultant's report and attended the workshop at which the various recommended actions were discussed. The executive director and Board members of the Amman Chamber of Commerce were provided with the consultant's report regarding the ACC and representatives of the ACC attended the workshop, although no follow-up session was able to be scheduled.

The consultant's reports to the six associations are attached as Appendices 1 to 6 hereto.

The consultant's recommendations covered, inter alia, the following areas:

- organizing for advocacy
- issue identification and prioritization
- education of membership re Jordanian law-making process and issues identified for advocacy
- establishing working relationships with law-makers
- advocacy strategies and tactics
- re-active Vs pro-active advocacy
- the value of coalitions

The foregoing subjects are addressed at length in the consultant's reports found in the appendices as well as in the paper presented to the workshop attendees (Appendix 10). Briefly stated, the following actions are recommended:

- * A basic objective of all of the business associations should be to *become part of the law-making process* and to *be seen* by government to be part of that process.
- * Those associations that do not have a committee charged with issue identification and recommendation of advocacy strategies should establish such a committee. As to the Amman Chamber of Commerce it is recommended that some or all of the 30 syndicates establish an advocacy committee as subcommittees of the ACC committee. The committees should be headed by Board members, should meet regularly and should "cast a wide net" for issue input from members.
- * Associations should prioritize their advocacy efforts, considering their resources for research and advocacy. Short-term as well as long-term issues should be undertaken in order to show some near-term successes to retain the interest and confidence of the members. The Young Entrepreneurs Association, for example, has focused on long-term, macro issues and needs to identify as well some short-term issues.
- * Formal mechanisms should be established to ensure support by the Board and membership for issues to be advocated.
- * Efforts should be undertaken to educate members regarding the *actual* (as opposed to on-paper theoretical) law-making process in Jordan in order for the association and its members to be able to intercede in the law-making process at the appropriate points.
- * Members must be well-briefed on the issues chosen for advocacy in order for them to be utilized in the advocacy process.

*** It is critical that associations establish good working relationships with law-makers in order to be successful when issues develop. Strategies for development of such relationships were enumerated including :**

- arranging membership briefing sessions by government officials and their staff**
- arranging meetings with parliamentarians prior to the parliamentary session to exchange views regarding business issues**
- arrange briefing sessions with government officials and parliamentarians and/or their staff regarding specific issues affecting business**
- during the parliamentary session, arrange for briefing up-dates on pending legislation**
- organize a “Business Day at Parliament” during which association members visit parliament, witness committee hearings and the session, possibly followed by a social event for parliamentarians**
- prior to parliamentary elections, arrange candidate forums to exchange views with candidates regarding business issues**
- arrange periodic meetings where officials from all levels of government (national, governorate and municipal) are brought together with association members to up-date each other on current issues and to exchange views**

- **at least annually, organize an appreciation event to honor government officials and/or parliamentarians who have been particularly helpful to business**

*** Various advocacy tactics were discussed, including:**

- **drafting of policy papers and proposed legislation**
- **working with government (ministry) and parliament staff**
- **providing issue experts to ministries and parliament**
- **enabling association members to become involved in the advocacy process through issue education**
- **using members to advocate**
- **using employees of members to advocate**
- **arranging public meetings for advocacy**
- **seeking support through the media**
- **arranging high-level advocacy**
- **hiring of professional lobbyists on an issue-by-issue basis or on-going**

- The value of coalitions was discussed, from the point of view of enlarging an association's image in the eyes of government, as well as spreading the advocacy burden by each association taking on issues within its particular capability and playing a supporting role on other issues.

* Considerable emphasis was given to being pro-active as well as reactive. The advantages of an association establishing its own agenda and thereby forcing government to react to its proposals and arguments were stressed. It was also pointed out that “the best defense is a good offense” – if associations keep their own programs in front of government, they maintain visibility and are more likely to be considered when government initiates policies affecting business.

ACTION PLANS

As an action plan for their near-term advocacy organization, issue identification and advocacy efforts, the six associations generally accepted the consultant's proposals as outlined above. The Director General of the Amman Chamber of Industry, however, indicated that he prefers to maintain ACI's advocacy efforts as they are now, namely, the personal effort of the Director General. It is recommended that a periodic (perhaps quarterly) review be conducted of the associations' advocacy organization, issue development and advocacy programs.

The Amman World Trade Center agreed to take the lead in organizing a symposium for all business associations regarding the Jordanian law-making process.

The Business and Professional Women's Club has agree to consider alternatives to its present name, recognizing that the word "Club" has counter-productive connotations that potentially weaken its advocacy position.

The consultant has recommended to AMIR and CIPE that, in addition to the program mentioned above regarding education of association members re the Jordanian law-making process, a program be considered to educate/ convince law-makers (government officials, parliamentarians and their respective staff) as to the benefits that would accrue to them from closer cooperation with business associations in the law-making process.